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BLACK FLAG

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Winter 2015

Edxie Betts in Conversation with Black Flag Editor

This issue, in lieu of a Letter from the Editors, we are including the following interview that our Black Flag volunteer editor conducted with our comrade Edxie (pronounced ED zee) Betts.

First, Edxie's self-written bio: "Edxie Betts is a Gender Non-Conforming or Non-Binary Trans, Queer, Black, Filipin@, Black foot indigenous, Anti-Authoritarian Liberation Artist who does service and cultural work to bring resources to empower and uplift the most marginalized of communities. They currently participate with Los Angeles Queer Resistance (LAQR) ([http://](http://laqrzine.wix.com/laqr)

laqrzine.wix.com/laqr), On Resistance Radio Collective on kpfk Pacifica Radio (www.onresistance.com), and Revolutionary Autonomous Communities (RAC-LA), to name but a few self-organizing groups and projects."

Interview: I met with Edxie on the crisp afternoon of December 29th, 2014. We met at the RAC-F@@ communal space (2515 W. 7th St, in LA) and spoke for about an hour and ten minutes. I recorded the conversation with the Sound Recorder program on an HP dv6 laptop running Windows 7. I transcribed the conversation using the Transcribe platform

(<https://transcribe.wreally.com/app>).

The conversation has been lightly edited to remove "filler" words, such as "um" or "like," but otherwise is more or less faithfully transcribed.

Black Flag: The first question I wanted to ask is about anarchism. Obviously, this is an anarchist publication. So, what are your thoughts on anarchism? Do you define yourself as an anarchist?

Edxie Betts: I really appreciate anarchist thought and tendencies. I kind of stumbled on to anarchism in 2012 when I was

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Happy New Year. Here's what you have to look forward to in 2015

By William Blum.

Reprinted, with permission, from Anti-Empire Report #135 (<http://williamblum.org/aer/read/135>)

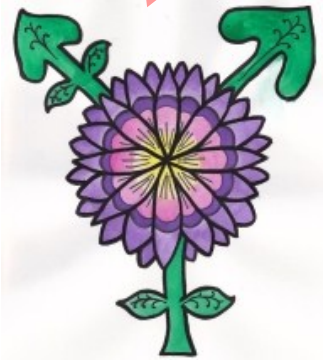
- January 25: 467 people reported missing from a university in Mexico. US State Department blames Russia.

- February 1: Military junta overthrows President Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela. Washington decries the loss of democracy.
- February 2: US recognizes the new Venezuelan military

junta, offers it 50 jet fighters and tanks.

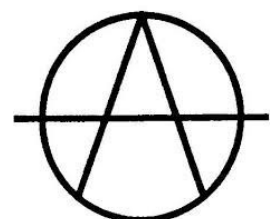
- February 3: Revolution breaks out in Venezuela endangering the military junta; 40,000 American marines land in Caracas to quell the uprising.

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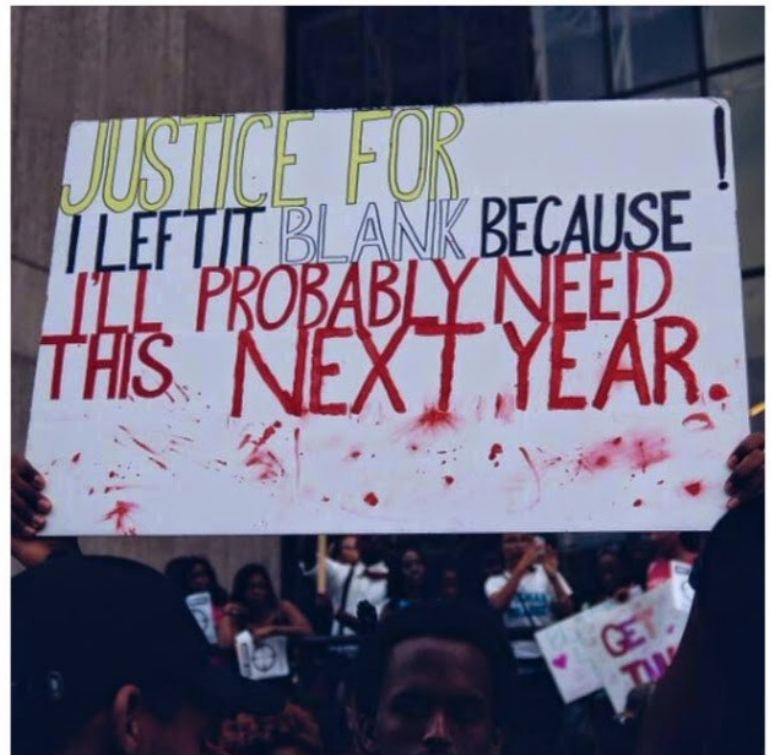


- February 16: White police officer in Chicago fatally shoots a 6-year old black boy holding a toy gun.
- March 6: Congress passes a new law which states that to become president of the United States a person must have the surname Bush or Clinton.
- April 30: The Department of Homeland Security announces plan to record the DNA at birth of every child born in the United States.
- May 19: The Supreme Court rules that police may search anyone if they have reasonable grounds for believing that the person has pockets.
- May 27: The Transportation Security Administration declares that all airline passengers must strip completely nude at check-in and remain thus until arriving at their destination.
- June 6: White police officer in Oklahoma City tases a 7-month-old black child, claiming the child was holding a gun; the gun turns out to be a rattle.
- July 19: Two subway trains collide in Manhattan. The United States demands that Moscow explain why there was a Russian citizen in each of the trains.
- September 5: The Democratic Party changes its name to the Republican Lite Party, and announces the opening of a joint bank account with the Republican Party so that corporate lobbyists need make out only one check.
- September 12: White police officer in Alabama shoots black newborn, confusing the umbilical cord for a noose.
- November 16: President Obama announces that Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, North Korea, Sudan, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba all possess weapons of mass destruction; have close ties to the Islamic State, al Qaeda, and the Taliban; are aiding pro-Russian rebels in Ukraine; were involved in 9-11; played a role in the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the attack on Pearl Harbor; are an imminent threat to the United States and all that is decent and holy; and are all "really bad guys", who even (choke, gasp) use torture!
- November 21: The United States invades Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, North Korea, Sudan, Nicaragua,



Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba.

- December 10: Barack Obama is awarded his second Nobel Peace Prize
- December 11: To celebrate his new peace prize, Obama sends out drones to assassinate wrong-thinking individuals in Somalia, Afghanistan and Yemen.
- December 13: Members of Ukraine's neo-Nazi parties, which hold several high positions in the US-supported government, goose-step through the center of Kiev in full German Storm Trooper uniforms, carrying giant swastika flags, shouting "Heil Hitler", and singing the Horst Wessel song. Not a word of this appears in any American mainstream media.
- December 15: US Secretary of State warns Russia to stop meddling in Ukraine, accusing Moscow of wanting to re-create the Soviet Union.
- December 16: White police officer shoots a black 98-year-old man sitting in a wheel chair, claiming the man pointed a rifle at him. The rifle turns out to be a cane.
- December 28: The Washington Redskins football team finish their season in last place. The White House blames Vladimir Putin.



participating with a lot of what the Occupy movement was doing. And I think one of the first books I read was Alexander Berkman's *What is Anarchism?* And a lot of people I was organizing with at the time all read it at the same time. It just made so much sense. It was thoughts that I had before, but it was under this particular political philosophy of liberation, and I really appreciated what it had to say.

I haven't ever really called myself an anarchist. Well, I have, actually, when introducing myself, just to throw people off, for example when I'm with comrades who are anarchists. I'll be like, "we're anarchists" [laughs]. And comrades are totally surprised. So, in that sense, collectively, I might be with the anarchists. But, at the same time, I like to say that the philosophy that I practice is anti-authoritarianism, and that I'm an anti-authoritarian. I appreciate people who do call themselves anarchists, because the history of anarchism is so shrouded with how the state defines what it is. So I appreciate that people are identifying themselves as anarchists, and dispelling the things that the state constructs for them, like being violent bomb-throwers or something like that. The reason I identify as an anti-authoritarian is because a lot of the world is dominated by Western/Euro thought. You can even say that "anti-authoritarianism" is a Western/Euro word. But, I feel like there are a lot of indigenous people that tend to identify more with anti-authoritarian principles.

BF: That was actually going to be my next question. What do you think about the allegation that anarchist thought is a Eurocentric ideology? Especially because I feel like there's a debate within anarchist circles over whether we should think of anarchism as being a European system of thought that started with Proudhon in the nineteenth century, or whether we should think of it instead as being a



universal tendency among humans. What do you think about that debate?

EB: Yeah, I've seen some comrades even with problematic signage that says "Anarchism: resisting authority since 1783" or something like that. [laughs] It's weird. The word anarchism does come from the Greek words meaning "against, or without, authority or leaders." But I don't think that just because... It isn't necessarily a theory that some one person has created, like Marxism or Leninism. It isn't so corrupted by this myopic lens of ideology. It's more of a practice, a practicing philosophy, that people belong to, that doesn't necessarily belong to any one person.

There are different strains of anti-authoritarian folks, or people who basically practice anarchist principles, that don't necessarily call themselves anarchists. Some people are now calling themselves "autonomous." That's an interesting direction to go... I don't know if I answered your question.

BF: Yeah, I think you did. So, I think the question of Eurocentrism relates naturally to the issue of white supremacy.



EB: And colonialism.

BF: And colonialism, of course. And how white supremacy is obviously an ongoing issue in the movement. Both in terms of what we're doing, resisting racism, white supremacy, and you see that, for example with all these issues around the police murders of people of color and that sort of thing. But you also see it in terms of people having unresolved issues, maybe, with privilege--

EB: Yes.

BF: Or with white supremacist ideas in their own thought, in the movement itself. And I was wondering if you could comment on those issues.

EB: Well, the thing about the movement that I was participating in was that we were actually practicing it. We were practicing a lot of the tenets, and using a lot of anarchist principles, not only in our organizing, but we were also in a space of collectivization that created this form of, not only ideas, but practices. And a lot of my social theory was created through not only practicing within a smaller collective but also practicing within a larger movement too. And that definitely changed the game for me and different comrades that I organized with. Now, of course, I feel that there are a few circumstances that I've been through in my life that have readied me a little bit more in terms of coping mechanisms that I've created for myself to handle trauma that other people who might be in positions of privilege might not have developed. That has allowed me to continue what I'm doing and allowed me to use organizing as a coping tool for these tragedies or traumas. But who knows, I might give up next week. [laughs]

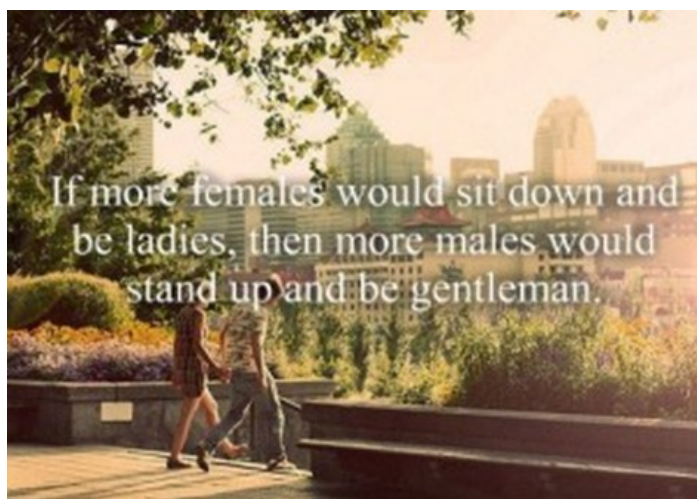
Also, in my experience, with white anarchist spaces-- like in Oakland, for example I was involved with some of the

“Female” is an Adjective: You Got Your Grammar in My Feminism!

First things first. Yes, I know “female” is also a noun. It’s not necessary to bust out the Merriam-Webster to prove me wrong. I have a few editions of my own. But all technicalities aside, language is a living, ever-changing entity, and how we choose to use words is important. They have meaning beyond what the dictionary tells us, and they have power. Using “female” as an adjective is rarely problematic: female scientist, female track star, female student. It’s a way of differentiating a particular gender when identifying an individual within a larger group. But “female” as a noun, for example, “They just hired a female for the sales position,” gives me pause.

We use “female” as a noun all the time. We use it to describe animals, or parts of plants, hell, even computer components have “male” and “female” parts. But what these things all have in common is that they are not human beings. Referring to a female human being as a “female” is reducing women to their most biological component and, in part, erasing their humanity just a little.

You see “female” as a noun tossed around a lot in certain places. Statisticians, for example, use it a lot when referring to women. Politicians use it a lot. Doctors use it all the time (although in a more clinical sense, not generally when talking to patients). You know who else uses it? Sexists. For some reason, “female” is the word of choice when people are talking about women in a disparaging or demeaning way. For example, this gem was kicking around Tumblr a while back:



Charming.

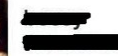
Abhorrent “message” aside, this pithy little picture manages to accomplish quite a lot: reducing men and women to their biological classification, implying that positive behavior on the part of one gender is dependent on approved behavior from

another, and offending me so much, from both a literary and feminist perspective, that I have to walk away for a minute.

Here’s the thing: “woman” implies both biology and humanity. To take it a little further, “lady” implies biology, humanity, and, to an extent, behavior or social standing. “Girl” implies biology, humanity, and age. “Female” reduces down to purely biology, removing the linguistic shorthand that clarifies that we’re talking about a human being here. And while it seems like a nitpicky little thing to focus on in the larger arena of feminism, we all know that words are important. When someone chooses to refer to women as “females,” they’re making a choice, consciously or not, to dehumanize and demean, and it’s such a specific verbal tic that I wonder if it’s ever truly coincidental.

--posted by [E] Rachel on the *P Magazine* blog, Oct 21, 2011.

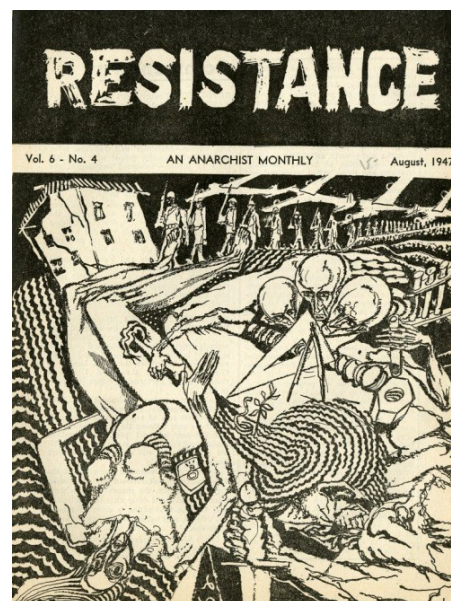
Original post: <http://persephonemagazine.com/2011/10/female-is-an-adjective-you-got-your-grammar-in-my-feminism/>



Referring to women as "females" is degrading, dehumanizing, cissexist.

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257 RETWEETS 193 FAVORITES



squats. And a lot of the anarchists out there were kind of, you know, "liberating" spaces in order to create, like I was saying, collectivized spaces to help sustain themselves. So they don't necessarily have to work a 9-5 job and they can just focus on organizing and building community. What I've seen in those spaces is not really a practicing decolonization. That's my take on the inherent flaw in American anarchism is they'll liberate these spaces and they're still using the same mindset of authority. Or authorship over particular spaces. And that's why I want to go a little bit further, and call myself an anti-authoritarian and practice anti-authoritarian ideals. And when you're doing that you're radically shifting how you relate to not only space, and the influence you have on that space, but also who you're engaging with within those spaces. So it doesn't necessarily belong to you. Especially since you liberated it, especially since you're not paying to stay in a space. But also, the fact that you are white, and you just moved to Oakland. And your whiteness is effecting, you know, the environment. It just adds to that gentrification. And there was a lack of analysis when it came to a lot of comrades that I was out there with that were not only adding to the gentrification but not literally collectivizing in a way that shared the resources that they had provided by this liberated space with the community.

BF: Can you think of a concrete example? Obviously, not in terms of naming names, or anything like that. But a concrete example of how people who are engaged in anarchist or anti-authoritarian work might still fail to behave as an anti-authoritarian, as you're talking about. To still exercise authority without realizing it. What would be a concrete example that

you've seen?

EB: Let's say you're a trans woman, and as a trans woman, you're so very wrapped up in the identity of your trans-ness.



Which all identities are, basically, socially-constructed.

And so, I think a lot of people get wrapped up in the oppression of it. And there definitely is oppression. But once you get wrapped up in the

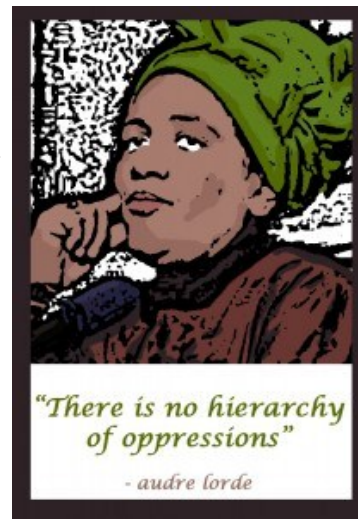
oppression you're kind of at this stagnant point where you're only thinking about the oppression. You're not thinking about what's causing the oppression, and how to defeat that cause, or destroy that cause. So my example was of a trans white

woman maybe not being aware of how much space she's taking up because of how she might be more entitled, or self-entitled, to take up more space in conversations, or make decisions on behalf of some people. And that in itself-- When you talk about a lot of us, people who are organizing right now, and healing ourselves from colonization, essentially, are talking about internalizing generations of trauma or oppression. Internalizing generations upon generations of being dominated, and that creates a kind of subordinated mentality. So people are trying to overcome that. While on the flip side, as people who are in places of privilege, they have to really

consider the amount of privilege that they have, where they are within the social hierarchies that exist, and know that if people have been internalizing generations of repression that they, in turn, are probably internalizing generations of entitlement and privilege. And that does, I feel, do something to your psyche.

And I've definitely seen people grow through a lot of decolonization. And it's not like it just happens in a day. I just think that you've got to be, like bell hooks says, constantly vigilant. And you've always got to work at it. You're not going to be decolonized in a day. And there are hiccups that you might have, and it's good to, instead of hearing-- if someone's calling you racist or patriarchal, instead of hearing that you are that, and being on the defensive, and trying to justify that you're not. Instead, try to figure out the ways in which you are, and the reasons why they called you those, you know, words: "patriarchal" or "sexist" or "racist." And find ways to change that, you know. Ask them, what ways can you correct that particular behavior so that you can grow, and you aren't oppressing, oppressing them.

BF: So one of the things that you're talking about is sort of an intersectional perspective. I might be, say, a white trans woman, and very well be oppressed by virtue of being trans. But at the same time, I might be the recipient of power or benefits, by virtue of being white, that I might not be aware of, is what you're



suggesting.

EB: Yes, totally. That was the pitfall that I saw within already-established anarchist organizing. It became almost this orthodoxy of people having all this knowledge and all this thought that they've read about. And maybe even went

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Statement of Repression of Anarchist and Socialist Activity in Long Beach

Submitted to AnarchistNews (<http://anarchistnews.org/content/statement-repression-anarchist-and-socialist-activity-long-beach>) by Anonymous on Mon, 01/12/2015

In late 2014, local autonomous participants, anarchists and members of Socialist Praxis at Long Beach City College began working together to host a discussion on police, prisons, and capitalism. This event was planned for January 10th and is now postponed after drawing the targeted attention of the Long Beach Police.

LBPD intimidated the owner of our chosen venue, Cultural Alliance Long Beach, into withdrawing their support less than a week before the scheduled date by citing inapplicable permitting requirements.

In this statement, we will seek to explain the substance of our event, detail the police repression of our political speech, and outline our next steps in gathering despite LBPD manipulating their position and the law to restrict our access to a community space.

While the event includes zines and literature, an open mic, DJ set, free burritos from Food not Bombs, and live performances from local bands, participatory discussions remain the main focus of our event. Our plan was to feature five speakers, each talking for 10-15 minutes, with open discussion amongst all participants between each talk. In this way, sitting in a circle facing one another, we hope to subvert the power dynamics of a traditional "panel", in which speakers drone from a lectern and others feel discouraged from participating. The planned topics were promoted as follows:

"The History of Policing (A Marxist Perspective)"

"Prison-Industrial Complex and Minority Communities"

"Hierarchy or Liberation"

"Why Riot? Anti-Police Struggles in Perspective"



"Opposition and BlackQueer TRANS*formation"

Our event drew support not only from anarchists and socialists, but various groups from the area, including a local chapter of Black Lives Matter, Food Not Bombs, Mission Solidarity, Fight for 15, and "Housing, Justice, and Equality Long Beach". In the days leading up to the 10th, excitement was building and we had high hopes for a smooth event at The Bungalow, a venue of Cultural Alliance Long Beach (CALB).

That's when the police chose to make their surveillance known. Five days prior to the event date, the manager of CALB was contacted by LBPD, who called the event "incendiary" and warned that it would "attract the wrong crowd." They went on to insist that the event lacked the proper permits and should be cancelled. Unfortunately, CALB's owner caved into this pressure with seemingly little awareness of political repression or thought to the consequences of chilling our political speech. This came after we had paid a membership fee to CALB, which supposedly permitted us to plan and host events in their space. In addition, a Space Reservation Form had been submitted for the event to CALB in December and was approved by their manager.

CALB has also been notified they will now be required to obtain permits for other community events in their space, extending our repression onto them by association. They have since stopped returning our phone calls, despite our efforts to maintain communication with them.

After pressuring to have the event cancelled, a police detective made repeated phone calls to the event organizer who booked the space. Thankfully, he declined to speak with them, and we commend him and the other members of Socialist Praxis for refusing to validate the disruptive tactics of the Long Beach police.

The Long Beach police have committed numerous violations and misapplications of the law in their attempts to repress our political activity, raising serious issues of selective enforcement and political discrimination. This is especially suspect given the nature of our event, which was to critically discuss the role of the police and their abuse of the law.



There is no such "gathering permit" we know of. The "Occasional Event Permit" knowingly misused by Law Enforcement to intimidate CALB holds no bearing on a free event centered around political speech, and is specifically intended for

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on consistent actions. I knew this one comrade who was consistently bragging about all of the actions that he's been on, but, like, he took up a lot of space. And on actions that we went on with him he was very demanding, he was, like "we need to do this, and that," when he's not from the community. And he's potentially putting people in danger through his actions, or he's talking to internal affairs when he gets arrested. That's another example of that kind of entitlement you have to work on in terms of yourself. There's a different tone now. There's people who are not only practicing to externally destroy the structures that are causing this kind of oppression, but also internally working on how they've been socialized. And there are all of these interlocking systems of domination that can often privilege them in some ways and oppress them in others.

BF: Related to that, there's a question that I sometimes think about. And it's complicated. Let's say, for example, that there's someone who was raised as a male-gendered person and then is transitioning to a female gender. To what extent do people like that maybe reproduce some of the patriarchal privileges they were raised with by virtue of having been raised male? Do you think that that's an issue? Or how is that manifested? Or how do we even think about questions like that in general?

EB: Yeah, it's hard to put that into context because I can only fall back on my own experience as somebody who is gender non-conforming and non-binary trans. And it's something I've lived with my whole life. And though I was socialized to be male, or a man or a boy or whatever, I felt a lot of dysphoria around that. Like, "I don't really feel like this is right for me. I don't want to do all of these things." And, I felt as though when I came out to my family around my sexual orientation that was a big deal. But I also felt that that was one step of my coming out of the closet. But then another thing

was that I realized that I didn't really tell my family that I was a gender nonconformist or non-binary trans because I didn't feel I had to. Because I felt that they've known my whole life that I was just doing all these things that were considered "girly" but at the same time I was very much hanging out with all the boys, and playing all the sports, but it was almost as though I was some sort of tomboy, in that sense. I feel that, in itself, is a different kind of dysphoria that I experienced, because it's almost like I didn't necessarily care. But I do see that there are definitely, with women, you know, anyone can be patriarchal or perpetuate particular ideas and languages of oppression. And that's where you have the anti-authoritarian idea come in more. There's a lot of language that I'm trying to nullify from my vocabulary because I do see how language kind of shapes the reality in which we're living. So I just won't say certain words, or if I do say certain words, it's around comrades that know what I mean when I'm saying them.

But, when it comes to people who are socialized or growing up as men, there is kind of this-- I feel like trans-ness is a hot-button issue right now. And it's becoming trendy, where it's kind of being marketed. And, look, capitalism, that's what it does. It recuperates particular struggles and, you know, sells them to individuals. It's like an identity that can be sold and that people attach themselves to. And I often do feel that it isn't necessarily authentic when sometimes people are saying that they're queer or sometimes they're saying that they're trans. And I have some comrades tell me that often, at times, they don't feel that they're queer enough to fit into something that I'm organizing. And, they have to understand that that's really unfair,



considering that the rest of the world is not oriented around queerness. By saying that you don't fit in with the people that aren't privileged by any of the heteronormative, or hetero-patriarchy, you're not aware of how offensive that actually is. By saying like, "oh, I guess I'm just not queer enough" or "I guess I'm not read as, like, a woman enough to"-- I don't think there is this "who is more oppressed?" or "who is more privileged?" necessarily, but people are privileged in very, very nuanced ways, or oppressed in very nuanced ways. Because I often do feel that I want to say to some of my cis-gendered comrades, "what you said was problematic to me in terms of my identity." But I don't think you should try to trump somebody with your identity.

BF: Like an "Oppression Olympics" kind of thing.

EB: Yeah, yeah. And, even that, in itself, is kind of a problematic phrasing, because I feel like a lot of people who do use the phrase "Oppression Olympics," often I feel that it's them trying to minimize some people's experience with oppression. But, I guess, to answer the question of people internalizing maleness-- I feel like that's everyone. Everyone needs to really step up when it comes to the processes of decolonization and find ways that they can unhinge those problematic behaviors that are learned and are socialized in. Because, I can admit that there were times where I was trying to fit into the "maleness" around me, and, you



Revolutionary Autonomous Communities (RAC)

Friends, contacts, and comrades,

We are very grateful for the ongoing support we've received in the past year, and we wish to thank all of our supporters for their generous gifts, donations, and volunteer labor.

In 2015, RAC-LA is continuing to build community power and local self-reliance through the mutual aid food program in MacArthur Park. As always, we need your support to continue and expand our work, and—most urgently—to help fund our community center (2515 W. 7th St.), which we're working hard to develop into a 7-day-a-week resource for the community.

Please consider donating through our secure PayPal link here: https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=JEXQA6K5YVBM8

Current Programs/Works-in-Progress at the Community Center Include:

- Free academic tutoring for local students on Thursday afternoons.
- Affordable, healthy food available to the community in-between Sunday food giveaways.
- A safe, inclusive community meeting space available to local groups and collectives.

Plans for Upcoming Programs at the Community Center Include:

- Expanded tutoring services 7 days a week.
- Expanded food access programs.
- Literacy programs/English classes.
- Women's/Community self-defense classes.
- Legal clinics/advising services.

The Free Association of Anarchists (F@@) would also like to thank RAC for its help in planning and carrying out our 2014 Skid Row X-Mas Day Clothing and Breakfast Giveaway, which was the biggest and most-organized yet. The community center was integral in storing and sorting clothes.

All of these programs, in-progress or still in the planning stages, can only happen with your support.

How You Can Help

If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Melva (English and Spanish) at racateers@gmail.com for more info.

To make the community center possible, we need to pay the rent, electricity, and maintenance costs. RAC is completely grassroots and community-run. We make no profits. We receive no government support and no corporate sponsorship.

Everything we do is made possible by community efforts, RAC member commitment, and generous support from donors like you.

Please consider donating through our secure PayPal link here: https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=JEXQA6K5YVBM8

Every gift made to RAC goes to maintaining the food program, the community center, and all of the other desperately-needed programs we are trying to institute there—programs run by, and for, some of the least-served communities in our city.

What is RAC-LA?

Revolutionary Autonomous Communities, Los Angeles (RAC-LA)

is a totally grassroots community organization that runs a weekly Food Program on Sundays, 10am-5pm, in MacArthur Park. RAC was founded in the aftermath of the brutal police crackdown on the immigrant rights march of May 1st, 2007.

The food program empowers the local community to feed itself, aiding with the distribution of more than 150 boxes of free, organic food per week. The program serves an ethnically diverse cross-section of the most under-served members of the community, including the poor, the homeless, and the recently-immigrated.



Community members themselves are the backbone of RAC, working in concert with local activists to get this critical work done.

Thank you for all of your support, and please keep us in your thoughts for donations and volunteering.

A better world is possible, and we can get there together. Venceremos!

know, in order to prove my maleness around other people who might consider me as male, but not really, I would say something sexist.

Masculinity is defined, is almost synonymous with, this sexist kind of behavior. Which is why there is this, within the trans/queer community, there are a lot of different- - when it comes to trans men, they have to understand that femininity is under attack in our society, when it comes to the things that reproduce. Those are the things that are under attack right now. When it comes to the land that creates, that is a thing that is under attack. When it comes to somebody, whether they identify as male or female, their reproductive organs are under attack. Because people are trying to mess with-- take away their autonomy when it comes to reproduction.

And when it comes to, whether you're a trans man, and you're masculine-presenting, there are conversations about understanding how you can take up space. Or replicate gender roles that are problematic or oppressive. And it's best to deconstruct that.

BF: What do you think is the role of allies or people who might be cis-gendered or heterosexual but are part of the anarchist or anti-authoritarian movements? I thought of that in terms of what you said about people saying they don't feel "queer enough" to participate in an action or event. I think that that could be taken in many ways. One of them might be that they themselves feel uncomfortable in those



spaces. Another might be that they're concerned about making the participants feel uncomfortable. And so, I was wondering if you could comment on what would be, sort of, if you had a magic wand to sort of make fellow radicals act "perfectly" as allies or as, what's the other word that's often used?

EB: Accomplices.

BF: Accomplices, yeah. Could you talk a little bit about that, and what you think, maybe, good behavior is or bad behavior is for people trying to assist in the struggle for queer autonomy or liberation?

EB: Well, I feel that there isn't any real key formula I can really think of other than really, really listening. Really listening to people and what they have to say. I can't tell you how many times I've come across self-proclaimed allies who, you know-- I'll sit in their all-men's circle because I don't necessarily identify as a woman or a man, and I figured maybe my perspective might be helpful in an all-male circle where they don't necessarily know what trans or gender nonconforming dynamics are. Or how much work or thought or activism are put behind our struggle. So, there have just been times when I've heard "allies" be like, "yeah, I went to like, an allies workshop, and the person that was facilitating it said that

the number one thing— that the first thing you're supposed to do is listen, and the second thing you're supposed to do is listen, and the third thing you're supposed to do is listen." [laughs] But then, I'll turn around and critique something that I find problematic that he's doing, or that the entire group's doing, and they just don't listen. They'll make excuses for what they're doing, like "well, this isn't a problematic thing, because it wasn't intended to be." And it's like, well, it is [problematic] because people that might face a little bit more marginalization than you in this particular regard are telling you that it's problematic. So, why aren't you listening? So yeah, I think listening is important as well as holding themselves

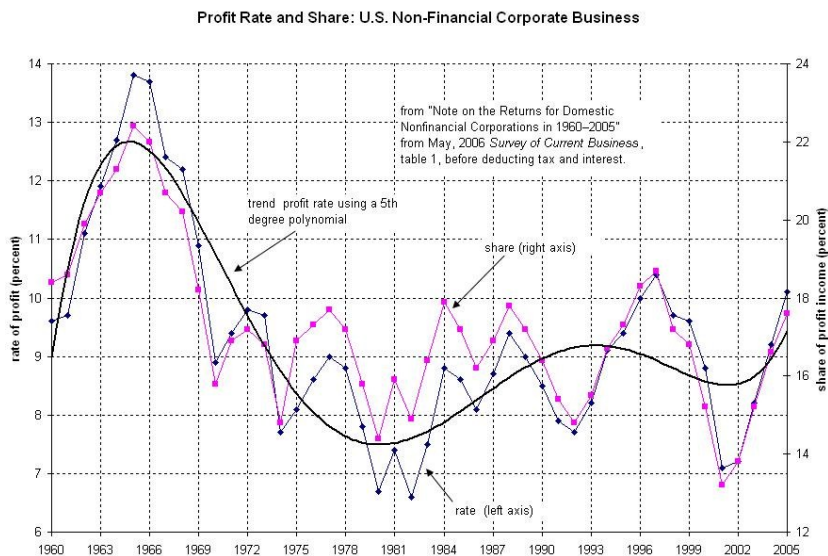
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Why Does A Revolutionary Participate in a Reform Struggle?

By John A Imani

There is a more tellingly-direct way to chart the class struggle rather than to mechanically measure the percent of the workforce unionized or the number of work actions in a given period of time. It is to measure what economist James G Devine¹ refers to as “The Share of Profits” (that portion of national income which is appropriated in the form of profits by the capitalist class):

This is as good a measure as exists of the relative strengths of the working classes and the capitalist ones. Note the rapid downward curve of the share of profits relative to income



occurring as of 1965ⁱⁱ which then leveled off and began rising (relatively moderately) after 1980ⁱⁱⁱ and then from 1992^{iv} onward increasing at a more rapid rate. Or, observe the rapid rise in profitability following 9-11-2001 that is a consequence of not only the neo-Keynesian bubble ignited by the flood of war production, and the wages and profits generated thereby, but also of the fears and trepidations engendered by the so-called “War on Terror,” and its accompanying climate of “Americanism,” that encourages workers to tighten their belts while the capitalists fatten their wallets.

We workers do not increase our share of the wealth that we have produced because the owners decide to be more “just.” We do so because there are objective forces at work that compel the bourgeoisie to grant us a few more measly crumbs on the table: the black power struggles (and consequent demands for economic parity); the women’s struggles (and their similar economic thrust); the Viet Nam War and the need to compensate for the inflationary pressures of such. Today, of course, blacks and other minorities are compensated in a manner similar to the majority population (not); women are out of the kitchen (and

into the frying pan); and, the war in Iraq came along precisely at a time of a dangerous deflationary pressure engendered by massive over-production, saturation of markets, rapid decline in profitability, massive layoffs, and hardly any union alive that dared to make wage demands when the country was fighting the terrorism its terror begot, to overthrow a regime it helped put into place.

Many “Marxists,” at best, abstain from, but all too often criticize unmercifully, work in so-called “reformist” areas. Such areas may even include support for classical “class struggles,” as in the trade unions arena. Most often, however, these same such “Marxists” give butt-kissing lip-service to ever-fewer actions of the trade unions while ignoring or denigrating the struggles of a sector of our class whose existence grows greater in size and looms larger in importance with each cut-back in employment, with each factory closure: the reserve army of labor (sometimes characterized as the lumpen proletariat).

The parameters of the social “safety net” are enlarged or made smaller due to the relative relationship of forces of owners and workers. The chart of the “Share of Profits” above owes its existence to, and in its turn becomes an index of, the level of the class struggle. This is true of any increase or decrease in the share of labor of the national income. The class struggle is permanent and its existence here is modeled.

The “safety net” is capitalist society’s safety valve. It is opened to “blow off steam” when working class pressure builds; it is mercilessly tightened when the workers accept defeat. The fiscal policies of societies are thus indicative of the level of their class struggles. It was against a backdrop of Watts 1965 that Lyndon Baines Johnson’s “Great Society”^v and even Richard Nixon’s proposed “Guaranteed Annual Income,”^{vi} can be referenced. These can be counter-posed to events and happenstances during what for the bourgeoisie are the “good times,” i.e. low activity across our class: when initiatives such as Bill Clinton’s Welfare “Reform”^{vii} are passed; and, alongside of these, the rise of the new neo-liberal blame-the-victim ideologue-apologists such as Larry Elder, Armstrong Williams, etc. who have made a profession of themselves of being professional Negroes. The bourgeoisie becomes even more haughty and intolerant of the requirements of human necessity as the rate of unemployment sinks.^{viii} The ideology and policies of the ruling class flexes or tightens according to the pressures placed upon it by the demands of those it lords over. Demands are inevitably engendered by changes taking place in the productive forces. We are now in the midst of such a time of change.

Capitalism has seemingly defied the time-and-again predictions

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accountable and interrogating their privileges.

It's hard, because time and time again, a lot of people of color have really tried, especially in Los Angeles, or even in general, a lot of people of color have really tried to work with, say, white people, and time and time again they're seeing, they're not really working on their generations of internalized privilege and entitlement. But, you see it, and it's really hard when there's more than one white person involved and there's that kind of blind privilege or that kind of conspiratorial base within the inherent privilege that people can use whenever they want. So you're not sure when they're going to use their privilege to gain something from you or try to further subordinate you or something like that. I recently watched this discussion between trans women of color out of New York, the Trans Women of Color Collective, as well as Black Lives Matter. They were having a discussion on this very topic: What can allies do? And I don't really like the term allies, because it's become this whole identity in itself. And there's some really good theory around critiquing that very framework of "ally" being its own social category, its own identity. And, when people think of LGBTQIA, they think the "A" stands for "ally." And it doesn't, just to let people know. It stands for "asexual" or "aromantic." And that's the issue, it's literally taken up space. It's like, we don't need allies, we need accomplices. Helping to interrogate their own privileges and destroy the very structures that privilege or oppress.

So, going back to what I heard people taking about in this conference call between Black Lives Matter and Trans Women of Color Collective, one trans woman was saying that accountability is a gift. And, working from there, working



from knowing that you can't really demand, as an accomplice or "ally," you can't demand for people to know how much you're an ally. You can't throw all the work that you've done for people in their face. There's some quirky sayings like "the first rule of ally club is you don't talk about ally club." [laughs] Because, you know, why should you have to? But it is helpful what we're seeing now, people stepping up who do benefit from hetero-

normativity or anti-blackness or cis-normativity or white supremacy, and they're stepping up and they're being the first line, or buffer, between, say, the police or being the buffer between somebody who is extremely problematic or who wants to harm them. But not in a way that is without consent of, you know, the person that's being harassed. It's really complicated because you also don't want to strip people of their autonomy by stepping into a position where it makes them feel less than, or makes them feel like you're being valoristic, or just trying to swoop in as a kind of savior. It's helpful to get that kind of consent that, you know, it's OK if you step in. And it's tricky because I feel like we do have to have good communication between people. I'm trying to do that myself with comrades who are people with disabilities. I often will remain silent or ask questions in terms of "how I can help?" or "is it OK?" You know, you just apply your particular struggle to theirs and what they might go through, because I've actually stopped participating in certain collectives because they'll make a joke about a social category that I belong to. And I'd ask questions about it and they'd be like, "no, we're just joking, it wasn't a really big deal." And I'd talk to other comrades in that collective, and they'd say "well, that's because they don't identify."

BF: Can you give a concrete example?

Are we talking about disability?

EB: I'm talking about queerness as a punch line. Or trans-ness as a punch line. And, it's like, why are you using queerness or trans-ness as a punch line when people are killed or beat up for belonging to these social categories? That's the issue, it's just like a giant joke to everyone. One of my comrades was talking about this, it was called something like the "pyramid of death," where something as small as a micro-aggression can expand into systemic genocide against people. It can get that serious. So, my concrete example was that the social category of queerness was made fun of, and when I questioned it, it wasn't really addressed. That kind of homophobia wasn't necessarily addressed. And when asking other comrades, they said "the reason they made fun of it was that they don't necessarily identify with that particular struggle." And I'm like, let me break it down for you in terms you'll understand. If a white person made fun of you for being brown, what would you do? You would take it pretty personally, right? Or if they made fun of another person for being brown, you'd take offense to that. It's the same thing, I don't understand why I have to explain it that way, in a way that orients or centers their identity.

BF: It should seem obvious, right?

EB: It should seem obvious. But I feel like I've also been in that position, too. Just in terms of, like, people with disabilities. It's definitely a constant vigilance. I guess I don't hold it against people who've made those slip-ups, because I know that they don't necessarily feel that way. But it's something that they should consider, how often oppressive language or these oppressive behaviors just add to oppression. There's something that you have to do to halt that. I don't understand why some people don't actively work on trying to halt that.

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Poems by Alex Comfort

Physician and writer Alex Comfort (1920-2000), probably best known for his nonfiction book The Joy of Sex (1972), was also a noted anarchist, pacifist, and antiwar activist, as well as being a rarely-read and woefully-underrated poet. Here we present two poems, borrowed from the book The New British Poets (edited by Kenneth Rexroth for New Directions Press, 1949), available for free online here: <https://archive.org/details/newbritishpoets030038mbp>. These poems exhibit both some of Comfort's radical politics as well as his considerable talents as a writer. —Black Flag Editors

PICK UPON PICK . . .

Pick upon pick in the sun at the sea edge
the prisoners sing and longer the raw trench
runs, and the hourglass white sand marks their time
and the tide treads its limits, flat as oil
At night the sea falls sharper, the moon fills
their footprints up, and crowding from far out
the waves press earnestly on the streaming edge
of the wire-bright tidemark, and still the prisoners sing
while in their sleep the diggers' feet tread home
Such voices over the wet sand and fields
as carry far inland, restless as a wheel
one long uneasy seaborne howl, the concourse
of voices worn by space to a wordless cry
a shadow of smoke that crosses fields at night
and the sleeping town that turns in its bed can catch
no words but the coming and going hum, the hands
that thunder on doors, o brothers, and is afraid
to hear the prisoners singing in the sea.

NOTES FOR MY SON

Remember when you hear them beginning to say Freedom
Look carefully see who it is that they want you to butcher.
Remember, when you say that the old trick would not have
fooled you for a moment
That every time it is the trick which seems new.
Remember that you will have to put in irons
Your better nature, if it will desert to them.
Remember, remember their faces watch them carefully:
For every step you take is on somebody's body
And every cherry you plant for them is a gibbet
And every furrow you turn for them is a grave
Remember, the smell of burning will not sicken you
If they persuade you that it will thaw the world
Beware. The blood of a child does not smell so bitter
If you have shed it with a high moral purpose.
*So that because the woodcutter disobeyed
they will not burn her today or any day
So that for lack of a joiner's obedience
The crucifixion will not now take place
So that when they come to sell you their bloody corruption
You will gather the spit of your chest
And plant it in their faces.*



BF: I'm glad you mentioned oppressive language, because that's probably more difficult. For example, as an anarchist myself, I obviously wouldn't think it's OK to make offensive jokes about anyone's identity. But sometimes I think language is more difficult. For example, it was fairly recently in my development that I realized referring to something as "lame" is actually extremely ableist, you know? And that's something that's out there in the collective consciousness of our vocabulary. It's hard to realize that you're doing it. If you really interrogate language, just the use of pronouns, for example, especially with trans issues, it's obviously a very difficult, complicated, and sensitive issue. Sometimes, the most offensive thing you can say to somebody is to use the wrong pronoun. So maybe you could talk about that, the difficulties with language. I wanted to mention something--I was recently reading Ursula Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*, and in that book she suggests that in order to make an anarchist society you'd have to invent a new, anti-authoritarian language. The anarchists in that book speak their own language that was invented by an anarchist linguist [laughs]. So, I was wondering if you could comment on language.

EB: Wow, yeah. I definitely have stewed on, in my position as an anti-authoritarian, on how, like I was saying, language does shape our very material reality. And when you talk about all of the State's language, the law, and how laws are written by predominantly cis-gendered, heterosexual, white, rich men. And how often that is replicated, how that law becomes hegemony that people live by. To their very moral core, they live by these words, these written

words, or institutional language. This language that reifies a lot of these oppressive identities or behaviors. And, I feel that, as an anti-authoritarian, it's a duty to interrogate the language, and to know how much language can actually influence space-time. I feel there's more analysis that needs to be worked on in terms of language.

And it would be great if people did create their own language. The issue with all of these Western/Euro languages is that they're completely saturated with gender or with state-sanctioned ideas. They perpetuate ideas of colonialism, and I feel that if these words were nullified from a lot of our language there would be a shift. And I've definitely seen a kind of shift in my language. And people do use problematic language, and it often stings, you feel it. These days, I hear somebody say the word "lame" when they're describing something, and it is kind of like-- once you start thinking in anti-authoritarian ways, or intersectionally, I feel that you are trying to not further alienate anyone from your space.

And there's a lot of crap going around. I remember when I first started practicing that, nullifying oppressive language, I and some of my comrades were being called "language Nazis," [laughs] and it's like, oh, great, you're comparing us to fascists, that's wonderful, you know. Just because we don't want people to be alienated by the language that you use, we're being called fascists. That's exactly our point, how language can really, really be problematic. So, when it comes to the etymology of what "authority" comes

from, it's like an authorship. And I do feel like the current authorship that exists today, and its language, is the servant of reason, and the reason that we're using is the reason of the oppressor, who conquered. And I do feel it's important to check that and analyze that and deconstruct that. I know that from the American Indian Movement, Russell Means was one of the first people I had read who gave a very critical speech to Marxists, as well as anarchists, in terms of-- he kind of

denounced written language, as well as schools and institutions like that, calling them indoctrination mills. Because, they do help to frame how people think and dictate how they act to their very spirit. That's why I'm anti-authoritarian. [laughs] There's this authorship that needs to be destroyed, and we need to advocate and fight for it destroying itself.

BF: I want to switch gears a little bit. You mentioned the conversation between the Trans Women of Color Collective and Black Lives Matter. And I was wondering if you could comment on the whole explosion of protest around the police murders of people of color, and what do you think the state of the movement is in LA? What are some of the issues with white supremacism or white supremacy in LA, and how do all of those things relate?

EB: I don't know where to start, because it goes from some of the first black people that were killed by the state. And there's a lot of different political generations learning from the last one, leading up to these resurgences and uprisings. To put Ferguson into context, you would have to talk about how they were experiencing a lot of anti-black racism, and how a lot of them were affected by gentrification. And how living in Missouri, and particularly Ferguson,



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there weren't a lot of resources, as well as, when it came to Mike Brown, that was kind of it. People had had enough. And it created an explosion of consistent protests. The people that were living in Ferguson, they deemed it murder. They just murdered this young black man. People now are saying, "nobody deserves to be shot up, even if they did rob a place." It's like, why do they have to be killed? Why are the police acting as the judge and executioner? The police are acting as these death-dealers that have the right to shoot any black person.

So, I guess in terms of the unrest that's been happening globally, and the hashtag blacklivesmatter, you've got to give it out to the people who created that organization, that hashtag: Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi. They're all black women who have been intentionally using this hashtag to organize. And I'm really grateful, because at the same time, when I was a learning to love my blackness more, and just hearing that [black lives matter] over and over again, it isn't necessarily a statement to people to people who don't think we matter. It's more of a statement to ourselves, because for generations, black people have been treated as less than, or seen as subhuman. It's in the constitution that we're three fifths of a person. So, that was really important, in terms of, this time around, when it comes to a social movement, it's not going to be only a political and social revolution, but also a psychological one. Where people are doing the things that they need to do in order to tell themselves that they're worth it. And, deconstructing all of this wanting to subscribe to white ideals and beauty standards or living situations or politics. I



think that this boom is really important in terms of possibly getting reoriented into a world that we want, you know? A world that isn't based on domination. And, Black Lives Matter as a social movement, it's this wild, untameable thing. I feel that there are quite a few black anarchists that are participating in Ferguson. You have Black Rose New

York, which has been

to Ferguson, and you have the caravan that some of the Black Lives Matter organization here [in LA] called for 500 people to go out there and help and support.

My thing is that people should definitely focus on the resistance locally, because it's weird how spread out Los Angeles is. And the death of Ezell Ford is pretty recent, I mean, he died a few days after Mike Brown died, and there wasn't this huge uprising that happened. I mean, there was uprising, but it wasn't mostly for Ezell Ford. And there wasn't even a Grand Jury for him, and, for me, I don't really care about having accountability from the police. Because, as I said before, accountability is a gift, and I'm not ready to take any gifts from the state or the police. I'm more interested in abolishing the police. And it's definitely easier to say "abolish the police" than to actually work for it. It's going to take a lot of work within the communities that we're living in. And I really wish I had a definitive place that I was living in that I could organize, because I feel that creating a tight-knit community is essential to trying to do what you can to create a model to de-legitimize the purpose of the police. The movement's kind of up in the air. I don't know what the next year, or few years, will bring. It's

definitely still prevalent, and people are just really worried about the momentum being lost. And in Los Angeles, I don't know if it's that we lose momentum so much as that people might not have a direction that they're aiming towards or going to. And there's a lot of co-optation, either by the state or political opportunists that aren't interested in liberation so much as reform. I've been involved more recently with a lot of the political study group, and I think it's really, really important in terms of people healing from the scars of internalized trauma, and what it means to be a black person in America. Originally seen as property, like spices, bought and sold.

It's definitely a very Afra-femme-centric movement, because it was created by women, and a lot of the women this time around are being a little bit more emphasized and highlighted. And yet, that's debatable, because still the issue of trans black women isn't necessarily being highlighted, and there isn't like a huge call for unrest over black trans women that are being killed. But people are definitely organizing around that, and I feel that we're having to have, start to have, conversations within our very own communities. We're trying to organize about the necessity of intersectionality, even within our own black communities. We're trying to fight the state, we're trying to fight the police, but we're also working on our own internal things. That's what I do appreciate about Black Lives Matter. It's been intersectional. Leave it to black, queer women to really talk about intersectionality and what that means.

BF: Could you define intersectionality, what you mean by it, in case our readers aren't familiar with it.

EB: The term was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in the 80s. So it's not like a real "Merriam-Webster" dictionary word. [laughs] But it means that all of the systems of domination are complementary to each other. And you

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can't really destroy one without the other. I think it was Audre Lorde who said that she doesn't like single issue politics because she doesn't live a single-issue life. You know, she was a black queer woman. And, it's interesting that, you know, James Baldwin got a lot of praise for saying that black men have a double consciousness because they live under white supremacy, but when you think about intersectionality, and you add more categories of social oppression to it, like being black or being trans or being queer or being disabled, you think about people having quadruple consciousnesses. Even the most learned scholar who doesn't have all of these particular oppressions can't articulate what it means to be a black, queer, trans, disabled woman, you just can't do it. So, I find it really exhilarating that a lot of people who might not have had the language to articulate what they are going through, have access to that through means of Tumblr, the internet, social media sites, and everything. And it's important that we do start naming our oppressions, putting labels on them. It's good to define that. And that's what was really empowering for me, when I found out what anarchism was or what white supremacy was or what patriarchy was. There are these systems of domination that I can now talk about and I can now look at as something that is responsible for the social conditions I've been living under. Because a lot of this racism, sexism, and a lot of these other kinds of things that mark what oppression is, but it doesn't really get to the root of what is causing that. So, I appreciate the fact that somebody like Kimberle Crenshaw fabricated a word to name what she's going through.

BF: It seems to me that if we accept the truth of the intersectional nature of domination and oppression, then the natural response for us, as radicals who want to make a better world, is some form of anarchism, right? If we define anarchism as opposition to all forms of illegitimate authority and

oppression.

EB: Yeah, that's what I feel. I mean, I can't tell you how much the practices of black feminists are so closely tied to anarchist principles. It's really amazing, reading about and discovering what their art does. A lot of these black, queer feminist artists have created not only these forms and ways in which to heal themselves, just through imagery or cinema, but ways that they can develop an oppositional lens to other forms of media that they're looking at, so that they don't soak it in, or that the authorship of this other media, or these stories or books, tell their narratives for them. So they're not soaking that it in, being subordinated by it, put in their place, so to speak. These other feminist, queer, black artists are almost weaponizing their art to craft this way of opposition that I think is really fascinating. That I'm trying to do, in my own art, that I put in Los Angeles Queer Resistance (LAQR). People should check it out. I write and draw for them, this queer zine collective.

BF: There are only two things I have left to ask you. The first is, is there anything else you want to say, or left out, or would like to fit in?

EB: Yeah, I appreciate a lot of people's work that they're doing. Because it isn't always recognized. And, I mean, recognition can be really important to some people, and it's good to recognize when people are doing stuff, and celebrate that. There should be ceremonies every month, just celebrating the amount of work everyone's doing, that they put into trying to coordinate and propagate resistance culture. And there's a lot of

unpaid labor. And, I don't know if I want the labor that I put into what I'm doing to be paid for. I feel like, in ways, it would taint that. But I also know that I got to live. [laughs] I'm just trying to figure out ways in which I can exist within this dystopia authored by the state.

BF: I guess my last question, then, is: you mentioned different kinds of revolution, economic, political, social, psychological. So my question is, what does revolution mean to you, and what does revolution look like in 2014?

EB: Well, I guess, it's been a really intense year. There's a lot that I've been through. Always, always, always fighting the patriarchy. I feel like, revolutions within revolutions have to happen. Because, society is very much upholding all of these systems of domination. It socializes people within them. So, a lot of the time society is very much the enemy to people like me, who are resisting every single institution that crafts society and instills this kind of social control onto it. But, I would say that I am having a hard time with notions of humanity when, as black people, we've never been considered human. And what sets the bar, and standard, for exactly what human is, is, you know, these Western notions of what it is. So, black people used to be paraded around as animals, and used as chattel slavery. And, in a lot of ways, within the context of the prison-industrial complex, and how many millions of black

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of its imminent demise, and it has done so through either and/or both of two mechanisms: expansion of its value-relationship or the destruction of the productive forces. The former means finds its expression as an expansion of the market in two manners: extensive or intensive. The first [extensive] involves the conquering of colonies, the development of "cold war" satellite relationships, the co-optation and subjugation of the national liberation movements, and finally the imposition of fiscal regimes by supra-national NGOs (IMF, World Bank), in conjunction with the subordination of national controls to international "agreements" (GATT, NAFTA, et al), that has brought the third world's workers, their products, and their land's raw materials into an uneven and devastating relationship with international capital—devaluing, distorting and destroying the worth of the former natural economies. On the other hand, by bringing the labor of this world-wide mass of an industrial reserve army into the mix through the export of capital to these countries, the labor of those in the advanced countries has had the floor ripped out from under it as the race to find the lowest wages prompts the closure of value-adding production lines and their transshipment abroad. A second means of the expansion of the market (the intensive) has been the wonderful inventions and developments of bourgeois capitalism bringing new wants and new needs. Its latest (and last?) incarnation were the computer and the telecommunications revolutions. These sustained an impressive expansion of the capitalist markets and bank accounts and a few crumbs dribbled downward to some

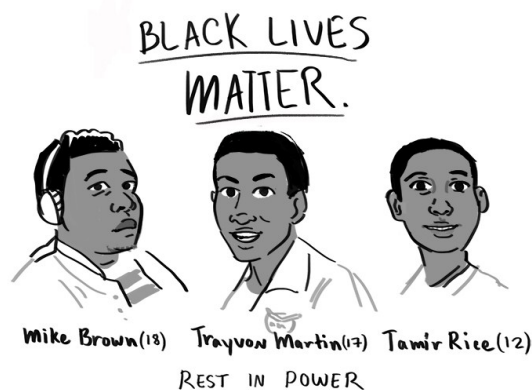
of the workers of the developed world. This expansion is at its end as the markets for these products at a price of production which yielded profit has been saturated. Inventories pile up, production is curtailed, capacity lies unused and workers are pink-slipped further reducing demand. Such was exactly the situation in the industrialized world prior to a "Great Depression" that was only ended with a resort to the destruction of productive forces and labor that was WWII, with its attending massive destruction of the productive forces. America's vault to the apex of the world's economic ladder was climbed rung by rung, first as the source of last resort for armaments and then as the exporter of capital to devastated Europe and Japan. No such solution presents itself on the horizon [today], though attempts to re-ratchet up a "permanent arms economy" through the bugaboo of a "war on terror" provides for the capitalist terrorists who produce weaponry a nice return, whose spending "trickles down" to other production sectors leading to a temporary curtailment in the precipitous decline in the general rate of profit—but only at the cost of putting all the more strain on a workforce and the reallocation of this prime element

and the other factors of production towards the production of values that have no human use: weapons of mass destruction. Such is the generalized situation which the

working classes of all countries find themselves facing today. Such is the specter which stares an American working class whose God-given duty it is to stare unblinkingly back and dare to be the straw which breaks this burdensome beast's back.

Who are the workers? What is it that we look like? Who are our friends, who are our enemies? What are the fights which we ought [to fight]? The answer to all of the above is, simply, all: we are all who must labor for a living and those dependent upon us. Against us all who do not. To win we must wage war against those who wage such against us. Thus all fights where dare a human raise hir hand against the hand that smiteth, all struggles against the ideas that debase, belittle, deny our worth are our fights. National, religious, racial, sexual, ageist and economic. The divisions which confront us must be ameliorated and can be ameliorated only through an inculcation of an understanding that there is an identity shared amongst those who labor for a living and their dependents. Matters not the language, shape of the eyes, or whether you go to church on Saturday or on Sunday or whether you stay at home and watch football. It is our statement that it is we who produce the values, it is the capitalists who take. That we must, ought, will determine how it is that, not only the values produced are allocated, but must, ought, will determine exactly what it is and how it is to be that these values are produced. That those who are capable of labor ought, and that those who are incapable can't, and that the latter are none the less the former because of that inability. That the labor of the production of our most valuable—indeed because it is our only—value-producing resource, the social production of workers through the rearing and education of children, is not only work but is labor of a greatest note. That those who have been beaten, battered, mutilated, and all-but-destroyed by the machinations of an economic system which utilizes people as means to its own end ought be resurrected. It is time that the monster slays Frankenstein. The people of the village need to look past the distorted exterior and into the soul of their less fortunate sibling, turning not upon the creature but joining in the chase of this (mis)creator out of dodge.

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The fiscal policy of the state joins Professor Devine's "Share of Profits" as co-indicators of the state of the bourgeois state, and they are inextricably linked. The amount and distribution of taxation, the size and relative values of the minimum, the prevailing and the union wage; the size, scope and accessibility of the public health system, the existence or non- of benefits accruing with employment; in a word, the struggles over the fiscal policies of the state invariably impact the conditions of those employed by firms in the private sector and in turn are influenced by them. Struggles in and over these and other areas are exactly where the arc of the "Share of Profits" line bends up or downward. A thousand little battles along a thousand fronts of class war, these determine the direction of the line. A direction that it is the duty of revolutionaries everywhere to assist the "ad hoc to this or that purpose" reformist organizations, often at the forefront of these battles, in pushing up the "Share of Workers" [while] pushing down Professor Devine's "Share of Profits" line. For but a cursory look at that line shows that the greater our struggle, the greater our share, the greater our class consciousness.

When asked by "Marxists," "Why participate in that (reformist) arena?" I am recalled to mind the tale of the heist man Willie Sutton who when asked "Why rob banks?" replied to the imbecile, "Because that's where the money is." The first question of this paragraph is as equally and astonishingly idiotic.

"In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole? The Communists...have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mold the proletarian movement. The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only:

In the national struggles of the

proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality.

The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement.

In all these movements they bring to the front...the property question..."^{xiii}

"LET THE RULING CLASSES TREMBLE AT A COMMUNIST REVOLUTION"

Author Biography from PM Press:

John A. Imani is a long-time revolutionary living and working in Los Angeles, and is a member of the Revolutionary Autonomous Communities -Los Angeles (RAC-LA). Under the name of S John Daniels he has written and produced six plays and is the author of three novels (<http://www.pmpress.org/content/article.php?story=JohnAIMani>)

i "Marxist Theory and the Millennium Crisis." <http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/~jdevine>.

ii Part of this may be the results of the anti-poverty programs initiated by LBJ's "Great Society" in an attempt to calm the winds of black rebellion.

iii The rise of "Reganomics" (vastly lowered corporate and income taxes while military spending induced a production bubble).

iv The "irrational exuberance" (Alan Greenspan) of the "Internet Bubble."

v en.wikipedia.org/wiki/

Great Society

vi "Despite expectations from some observers that Nixon would be a 'do-nothing' president, his administration undertook a number of important reforms in welfare policy, civil rights, law enforcement, the environment, and other areas. Nixon's proposed Family Assistance Program (FAP), intended to replace the service-oriented Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), would have provided working and nonworking poor families with a guaranteed annual income—though Nixon preferred to call it a 'negative income tax.'" Encyclopedia Britannica. "Richard M Nixon." <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/416465/Richard-M-Nixon/214055/Domestic-policies>

vii "...when I ran for president in 1992, our system still was not working for the taxpayers or for those it was intended to help. In my first State of the Union address, I promised to 'end welfare as we know it.'" Bill Clinton. "How We Ended Welfare, Together." NY Times. August 22, 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/22/opinion/22clinton.html>

viii Note also that its share of profits rises during "good times" (as during the productivity driven early to mid 90's) and its decline (referenced below) since.

ix An example of which was the destruction of the indigenous economy of Chiapas, Mexico by the enactment of the NAFTA agreement which simultaneously destroyed the value of Chiapan corn by counterposing to it the mass produced corn of the Mid-West and prompted the rebellion of the Zapatistas "who sought to restore by force the vanquished status of the" ejidos. Ned Lud was, in my opinion, a highly sympathetic persona.

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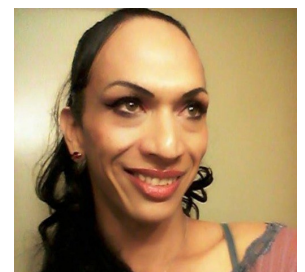
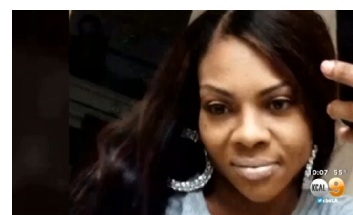
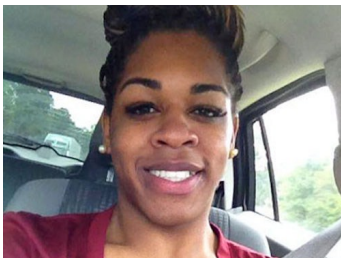
x And then to lower even these (through the imposition of currency devaluations and austerity regimes).

xi As Marx analyzed, the formation of a generalized (or average) rate of profit (GROP) and the tendency of that rate to fall are interconnected phenomena implicit to the driving force of capitalism, competition, and are, hence, unavoidable in the long term. The former comes about through capital flows from areas of low return and to areas of relatively higher rates. The effect, as more production is undertaken in these 'attractive' arenas, is to lower the rates of return in this sector through price competition leading to a return on capital investment that is directly proportional to the size of that investment ($R = C \times P'$; where R = amount of profit (return); C = size of capital investment; and, P' = GROP).

The decline in that general rate is likewise the product of that élan vital: Competition compels all capitalists, in a given sector, upon penalty of irrelevance (i.e. being undersold) to adapt any technological adaptation ("labor-saving") adopted by any of its members. This increase in the constant aspect (value-transferring) of capital (in this case, machinery) relative to the variable element (value-creating labor) results in a decline in the rate of profit ($p = s/c + v$; where p = the rate of profit; s = surplus-value (that portion of value-added by labor that is not paid to labor and thus the source of all profit); and, $c + v$ = the constant and variable aspects of the capital investment). All other things being equal, it is obvious that an increase in the value-transferring aspect (c) relative to the value-adding respect (v) causes a reduction in p ($p = s/c + v > p = s/(c+) + v$).

xii en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willie_Sutton

xiii Marx, Engels "The Manifesto." Foreign Languages Press. Peking. 1968. pp. 47, 75, 76.



BLACK TRANS LIVES MATTER

REST IN POWER

Lamia Beard.
Ty Underwood.
Goddess Edwards.
Yazmin Payne.
Tyra Underwood.
Taja De Jesus.
Leelah Alcorn.

business related events involving their clientele for the sole purpose of entertainment.

We want to be as clear as we possibly can: our event is an expression of radical political speech and is not aimed to entertain anyone. There is nothing entertaining about police violence, and the structural violence of prisons and capitalism.

A lawyer has also advised the organizers that these permit requirements, even if legally applicable, have yet to be proven constitutional, especially if being used by the LBPDP to restrict political activity that calls their own legitimacy into question. In the coming days and weeks, the State may well answer for these missteps in their own courts.

The police want to divide us from one another by raising issues of permission and legality: a traditional point of contention between anarchist and socialist groups. However, in response to police intimidation, we have decided to go forward without permit and open up a space for dialogue at a new location. If the police choose to continue their harassment, we will be prepared with CopWatch on stand by to film them. Lawyers and legal observers will be on hand to witness their actions.

We feel it would undermine the intent of our event and the growing movement against police terrorism to comply with a group (LBPDP) that organizes itself on violence and intimidation. This repression is relevant to all movement people and community organizing in general because it exposes how dissent against State sanctioned violence is being targeted or coercively managed by those in established positions of power.

IN TIMES OF TENSION:

If the cops think they can shut us up, they need to think again. We say "Fire to the Prisons!" because so many are still locked in cages. We say "Fuck the Police!" because the institutional white supremacist violence of the state continues unabated. And we say "Open the Borders!" with our thoughts towards those deported, or locked in the open-air jails of repressive powers. In times of tension we choose not to be silent.

In response to police repression, we see cause for increased participation, collaboration and solidarity. The event is going forward, on Saturday January 31st. Keep an eye out for location and time updates.

Signed,

Local Anarchists
Socialist Praxis

bodies and even brown bodies are in there. They are still considered just that--kind of subhuman property. So, I think that [mentality of resistance] is very dangerous. If that kind of mentality spreads to a lot of different black people, the state would have a lot to deal with. [laughs] Because the very notion of this country not having a right to exist, you know, is very, very threatening to the nation state. And I hope it is, I hope that [notion] spreads, and that kind of revolution within revolution doesn't die with me. That it lives on.

So, in a way, I'm not interested in revolutions that continue to perpetuate human supremacy, and what that means in terms of the commodification in terms of everything that exists. Commodification relative to that authorship that I was talking about, attaching a worth, a value, whatever you want to call it, to something. So that's kind of where I'm at, just in terms of what revolution may mean. I heard Ward Churchill talking about de-evolution, where we don't necessarily want to evolve, we have to kind of go back to what it means to connect with the land, because all of the resources that we do have are becoming-- it's just not sustainable. And I don't think an overthrow of capitalism and becoming a political economy where there aren't any bosses but there's still the amount of commodification of resources, and the materials that are necessary to survive, I don't think that that's sustainable either.

BF: Well, thanks a lot for agreeing to do this interview. I really appreciate it.

EB: Thank you.



Update on the Marissa Alexander Case: Marissa Alexander Released from Prison; Supporters Celebrate, Demand FULL FREEDOM!

Originally posted on www.FreeMarissaNow.org, Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Supporters of Marissa Alexander in Jacksonville, across the US, and all around the world are overjoyed that Alexander has been released from jail after serving 3 years behind bars for defending her life. In 2010, Alexander, a black mother of three from Jacksonville, Florida, was forced to defend her life from a life-threatening attack by her estranged husband by firing a single warning shot that caused no injuries. State Prosecutor Angela Corey prosecuted Alexander, pursuing a 60 year mandatory minimum sentence. On November 24, 2014, Alexander accepted a plea deal that included time served of nearly 3 years in prison, 65 additional days in the Duval County jail, and 2 years of probation while under home detention. Today marks the end of her time behind bars.

"We are thrilled that Marissa will finally be reunited with her children, her family, and her community," said Sumayya Coleman, co-lead of the Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign. "Today's hearing revealed that Marissa intends to attend school to become a paralegal and she is a wonderful mother to her children who urgently need her. Amazingly, the State continued their campaign of punishment by trying to add two more years of probation on top of the two years of house detention included in the plea. Fortunately, they failed. Marissa and her family will need time to begin recovering from this arduous and traumatic experience. It's been a long and painful journey and, though her release from jail is definitely a win -- no 60 years -- the journey of seeking ultimate freedom is not over. Marissa will be forced to be on strict home detention while being under surveillance for two years. This is by no means freedom in the sense we feel she deserves. Our next agenda is to seek full

restoration for Marissa and her family, including the expunging of her so-called criminal record, and a systemic transformation that prevents black women and all survivors of domestic violence from experiencing the hostile and brutal treatment from policing, prosecution, and prison systems that Marissa has endured. We will push for improved legislation and monitoring of systems that penalize victims of domestic violence who choose to save their lives by force. This is by no means a conclusion."

Alexander will be forced to wear and pay for a surveillance ankle monitor, and forbidden from leaving her home with the exception of attending work, church, her children's school, and appointments with doctors or the court. This will effectively "prisonize" her home, as noted by journalist, Maya Schenwar. This practice of extending a prison culture of surveillance, punishment, and confinement into people's homes and communities has significantly increased in the U.S., creating what Prof. Beth Richie has described as a "prison nation," especially for black women. Coercing probationers to pay for surveillance monitors is also part of the increasing privatization of punishment in the U.S.

Since 2012, the Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign has organized to free Alexander from the punishing experience of being prosecuted for self-defense. Supporters have organized in Jacksonville, across the United States in dozens of cities, and around the world to demand Alexander's freedom. Aleta Alston Toure', co-lead of Free Marissa Now said, "For almost three years, this campaign has raised critical awareness about Alexander's case, raised much needed donations for her legal defense fund, and raised a movement that takes a stand against mass incarceration and domestic violence. If this targeting of Marissa had unfolded behind closed doors and without powerful pushback from people who believe in justice, we believe

she would still be in prison today. Organizing matters."

Organizers are hosting a number of direct actions in support of Alexander's freedom. In Jacksonville, organizers will hold a press conference today at 12pm on the Duval County Courthouse steps. They will also welcome a display of The Monument Quilt, 350 quilt squares containing stories from survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in solidarity with Marissa Alexander. The quilt will blanket the Duval County Courthouse lawn on January 27th, 8 am – 2pm.

Local organizers will convene a televised People's Movement Assembly to be held on January 28th, 1pm at WJCT/ PBS, 100 Festival Park Ave. The assembly discussion will focus on state violence against women and will include Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw, Columbia University, UCLA, & the African American Policy Forum; Kerry McLean, National Lawyers Guild, Dr. Faye Williams, National Congress of Black Women; Dr. Rose Brewer, University of Minnesota; and Dr. Beth Richie, University of Illinois, Chicago and INCITE!. The assembly will be hosted by local Free Marissa Now member, Denyce Gartrell.

The Chicago Alliance to Free Marissa Alexander led a recent major fundraising push that raised \$11,000 to help Alexander cover the cost of her ankle monitor for the two year period of home detention. They are organizing a January 27th discussion about how to talk to children with imprisoned family members about incarceration, which will occur at 6pm at 637 Dearborn St. in Chicago.

The Free Marissa Now Bay Area collective also organized a caravan that traveled from Oakland, CA to Jacksonville, FL, raising awareness about Alexander's case in cities along the way. Details about all of these events can be found at freemarissanow.org.

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NO GOD
NO MASTER
NO PROBLEM!

Marissa Alexander Update con't

"It's hard to summarize the incredible outpouring of rage, love, and commitment to freedom that has arrived from all around the world in solidarity with Marissa Alexander," said Alisa Bierria, also from Free Marissa Now. "Hundreds of people have donated, created art and media, and organized direct actions, letter writing sessions, and teach-ins in Jacksonville, Chicago, Berkeley, Los Angeles, New York, Pittsburgh, DC, New Orleans, St. Louis, Seattle, Denver, Miami, Canada, Australia, and many other locations. The dozens of projects that Marissa's supporters have organized have been creative, brilliant, and impactful.



Together, we have not only helped to ensure Marissa's release from prison, we have hopefully shown why we must keep addressing the connections between domestic violence, reproductive violence, and state violence. We warmly thank and honor every person who has contributed to this historic freedom movement."

Free Marissa Now notes that Alexander has asked supporters to use her case to bring more attention to women

in similar circumstances, such as Tondalo Hall and Charmaine Pfender.

Organizers will publish a report about the Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign on their website, freemarissanow.org, in the coming weeks.

The Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign is an international grassroots campaign led by a core of organizers representing the African American/ Black Women's Cultural Alliance, New Jim Crow Movement - Jacksonville, and INCITE! Women of Color and Trans People of Color Against Violence. For more information, see www.FreeMarissaNow.org.